



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA SIGNS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH NATIONAL MINORITY SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

MIAMI -- Aida Alvarez, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), today signed a partnership agreement with the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC), one of the country's leading business membership organizations. The agreement is part of SBA's three-year Outreach Initiative designed to dramatically increase the amount of financing and other technical assistance available to America's minority entrepreneurs.

Signing the agreement on behalf of the NMSDC was Harriet R. Michel, the organization's president. The NMSDC, chartered in 1972, represents more than 3,500 corporations and 15,000 minority-owned businesses, and works to promote business opportunities among its membership. The group is holding its national conference in Miami and Administrator Alvarez is a featured speaker.

“The theme for this year’s NMSDC national conference speaks of building partnerships,” said Administrator Alvarez. “That’s exactly what we’re doing today. We’re putting pen to paper and building a partnership between the SBA and the NMSDC. For the thousands of minority-owned small businesses involved with NMSDC, this can mean increased access to capital, more exposure to government contracting and closer cooperation in the delivery of SBA management and technical assistance.”

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Administrator Alvarez describes the outreach effort as a key ingredient in helping the SBA keep pace with the changing face of American small businesses as the nation heads into the 21st century. She noted that the latest Census Bureau figures show that the number of businesses owned by Hispanic Americans grew by 83 percent over a recent five-year period, and businesses held by African Americans grew by 46 percent. This compares to a 26 percent growth rate for all businesses.

SBA lending to African-American and Hispanic-owned businesses has more than doubled under the Clinton/Gore Administration. The SBA has set aggressive goals to significantly increase lending to African-American and Hispanic-owned small businesses by the year 2000. This newest agreement is seen as an important tool in helping the agency meet those goals.

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The U.S. Small Business Administration, established in 1953, provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run, and grow their businesses.

With a portfolio of business loans, loan guarantees and disaster loans worth more than \$45 billion, SBA is the nation's largest single financial backer of small businesses. Last year, SBA offered management and technical assistance to more than one million small business owners. SBA also plays a major role in the government's disaster relief efforts by making low-interest recovery loans to both homeowners and businesses.

America's 23 million small businesses employ more than 50 percent of the private workforce, generate more than half of the nation's gross domestic product, and are the principal source of new jobs in the U.S. economy.

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